Drunk Driving

The Deep Roots of Booze

- Jugs that contained beer have been found in sites dating to the late Stone Age
- Fortunately, cave men didn’t drive

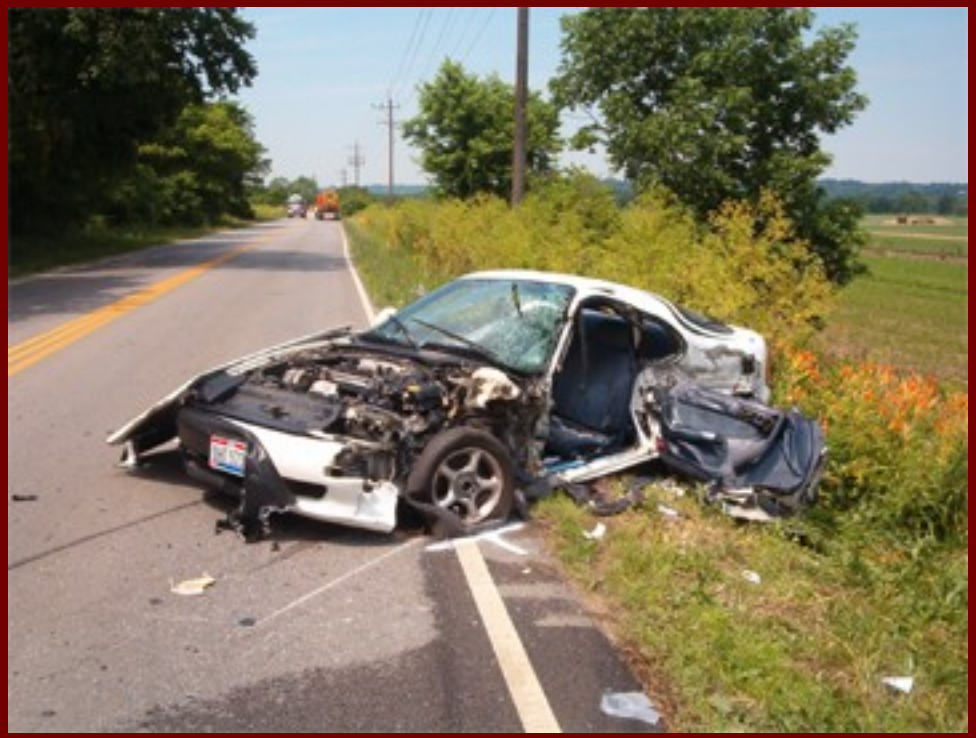
Modern Consequences

- DWI/DUI arrests and trials
- Suspended/revoked drivers licenses
- Confiscated vehicle plates
- Impounded vehicles
- Arrests for open containers
- Fines and jail terms for drunk driving
- Mandatory alcohol education

Costs and Carnage

- 16,885 alcohol-related traffic deaths in 2005—an average of one every 31 minutes.
- 86% were in crashes where at least one driver or victim had a BAC of .08 or higher
- Drinking is one of the most common factors in mishap involving Sailors aged 18-to-25.

Alcohol-Related Wrecks

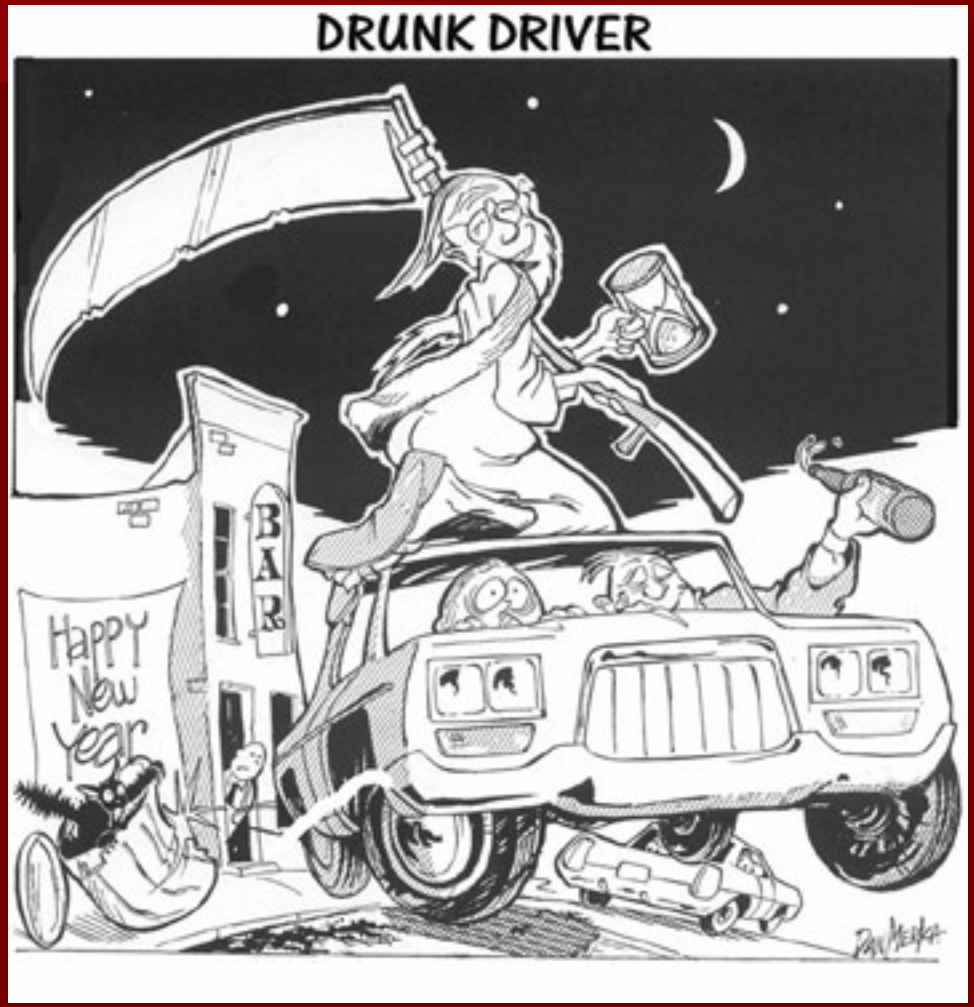


- Four out of ten traffic deaths are alcohol-related: either the driver or a victim had been drinking.
- “Alcohol-related” means at least one of the people involved has a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .01 or higher.

Drinking makes wrecks worse

- Among 15- to 20-year-old drivers killed in wrecks in 2005, 28 percent had been drinking.
- The more you drink, the worse the wreck. For 15- to 20-year-old drivers who had been drinking and crashed during 2005, 2 percent of the wrecks only damaged property; 4 percent injured someone; and 21 percent killed someone.

What's it cost?



- An estimated 254,000 persons were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present.
- Of the drivers who are killed in wrecks, about twice as many males (39%) had BACs at or above 0.08 compared to females (19 percent). The percentage was highest among males ages 21-40.

Danger after dark

- Alcohol involvement in fatal crashes peaks at night.
- For wrecks between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., 58 percent of the fatally injured drivers had BACs at or above 0.08, compared with 19 percent during other hours.

More fatal factors

- 45% of the drivers fatally injured on weekends (6 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Monday) have BACs at or above 0.08, compared with 24 percent at other times.
- Only 28% of the fatally injured drivers involved in nighttime single-vehicle crashes had no alcohol in their blood.

Strict Laws

- All states now have a law defining “impairment” as driving with a BAC at or above 0.08, and making it illegal.
- All states also have "zero tolerance" laws that prohibit people younger than 21 from driving after drinking. These laws usually prohibit driving with a BAC of 0.02 or greater.

More Than a Million Arrests

- In 2004, the FBI estimated that more than 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs—an arrest rate of 1 for every 139 licensed drivers in the U.S.

When the risk goes up

- The rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is more than three times higher at night as during the day (59% versus 18%).
- In 2005, 30 percent of all fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-related, compared to 52% on weekends.

When the risk goes up, cont.

- The highest percentage of drivers in fatal crashes who had BAC levels of .08 or higher were ages 21 to 24.
- A BAC as low as 0.02 has been shown to affect driving ability.
- The probability of a fatal crash rises significantly after 0.05, and even more rapidly after about 0.08.

More drinks = Fewer seatbelts

- Drunk drivers are much less likely to be wearing seatbelts.
- Safety belts were used by only 28 percent of fatally injured drivers with BAC levels .08 or higher, compared to 56 percent of fatally injured drivers who were sober.

Alcohol adds more risks

- Drivers are less likely to use seatbelts when they have been drinking.
- In 2005, 74 percent of the 15- to 20-year-old drivers killed in fatal crashes who had been drinking weren't wearing seatbelts.
- Drivers with BAC levels .08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were nine times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired than were sober drivers.

The Truth

- Just because you don’t look or act drunk, that doesn’t mean you’re OK. Many alcohol-impaired drivers don’t look drunk in the traditional way.

“Just one” may be more than you think

- Studies have shown that at BACs as low as 0.02, alcohol interferes with your ability behind the wheel and makes it more likely you’ll crash.
- The probability of a crash begins to increase significantly at 0.05 BAC and climbs rapidly after about 0.08.

Spotting a drunk driver

Tell-tale behaviors of DUI/DWI drivers:

- Driving too fast or too slow for road conditions.
- Weaving or drifting across the center line, between lanes of traffic, and the side of the road
- Using turn signals when they aren’t required.
- Swerving.
- Suddenly accelerating, hitting the brakes or stopping for no apparent reason.

Spotting a drunk driver, cont.

- Driving with the headlights off after dark.
- Swinging too wide when turning.
- Stopping abruptly at red lights or stop signs.
- Starting too slowly when a traffic light turns green.
- Narrowly missing other cars or objects.
- Turning abruptly or illegally.

What part of this sign is hard to understand?